



Burrowed – Inside the Haines Borough  
Third Edition 8/29/23

This is the third edition of this newsletter intended to provide you more information about your Borough government's activities. My Manager Report tries to capture the most important issues between Assembly meetings, but there are many other activities taking place that I'd like to share with you.

If you don't wish to receive this newsletter, please feel free to opt out by replying in the Subject line – OPT OUT. The intent is not to overload your inbox, but to provide information that is short, easily downloaded with minimal graphics, and informative.

**PERSONNEL CHANGES:** We will have staffing changes over time in the Borough. We've had a number of them since I began here in October 2021 – Tourism Director, Planner, Water/Sewer operators, Contracts/Grants Administrator, Heavy Equipment Operators, Public Facilities Maintenance, Dispatchers and IT and Assessor contractors. The Borough of Haines, including the school district, has been behind the curve in employee compensation. However, we have made good strides balancing salary increases with a small population and the economic drivers in Haines. I strive to have a work environment that encourages and assists our employees in finding work/life balance. I've been contacted when we've had vacancies with advice to just "pay whatever it takes" to keep an employee. I have to have a longer view – whatever salary agreement we come to for any employee will impact future salaries for all employees. The age of "cradle to grave" employment is over – very few employees continue in the same position as they did when I first started my career. I'm absolutely grateful for the institutional knowledge that long-term employees bring to the workplace. We want to continue to reward that longevity and productivity. We also have to acknowledge that the work place is changing. Our goal is to be the best small government employer in Southeast Alaska, if not through salary through family friendly policies.

**MORE ON PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS AND OUTHOUSES:** I've had personal experience in the past with an assessor assuming that a structure on my property was more complete than it was. I know it happens in the assessment process. I encourage

anyone who believes that a structure or building has been improperly assessed to first contact the assessor, Michael Dahle (mdahle@haines.ak.us) or assessor-in-training Donna Lambert (dlambert@haines.ak.us). They have been able to successfully work with a number of residents to satisfy any such misunderstandings.

The next meeting of the Board of Equalization is September 21. Appeals scheduled for August 17 were withdrawn and so the meeting was canceled. I am aware that a member of the BOE has expressed a desire to reconsider action on one appeal. That is expected to be taken up at the September 21 meeting, if the motion is made to reconsider.

Recently, it was alleged in letters to the editor that an outhouse had been assessed for property tax purposes. This is untrue. Assessors do note all structures on a property, but not all structures are assessed for property tax purposes. Below you can see the difference between the structure that was assessed – wood shed and the outhouse, which was not.



Wood Shed

Outhouse

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONTINUES:** We've had some questions about whether the online Comprehensive Plan Survey can be spammed by people filling it out more than once. It is actually not easy to take the survey more than once, as the survey tool does not accept repeat surveys from the same IP address, someone would have to make a real effort to find different devices on which to fill out the survey. Agnew::Beck has a process to "clean" the data and remove any duplicates as part of the curing process. The current count is 527 - which is 200 more than needed for statistically significant results. Even if no more surveys come in, we have survey findings with a 99% confidence level, and a 4.9% confidence interval. We just don't get better survey results than these. The last time this particular survey was done, it received 208 responses.

The next Comprehensive Plan Community Meetings will be at the ANB Hall:

6-8 pm Wednesday, September 27 and

6-8 pm Thursday September 28

The idea is to provide two opportunities for people to hear an update from the Agnew::Beck team about what the planning team has learned and heard so far including survey results and emerging vision, values and priorities for the comprehensive plan.

**ELECTION TIME:** Although the application period for candidates to appear on the ballot has passed (August 20 was the deadline). Candidates may still enter as a write in candidate. A letter of intent must be filed with the Borough Clerk not later than five calendar days before the general election. The Code describing the process is: HBC 11.24.030 Write-in candidates.

Borough Clerk Alekka Fullerton can help answer questions if you are interested in running for any of the offices that will be open in October. A number of candidates have already stepped forward for consideration by voters. Clerk Fullerton's email address is: [Clerk@haines.ak.us](mailto:Clerk@haines.ak.us) and her phone is 907-766-6402.

In service to Haines-  
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